

## **Frequently Asked Questions (Childcare settings)**

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) include responses to questions that have been asked by childcare settings in Waltham Forest and answers to questions which highlight important aspects of the national guidance specific for under 5s provision. These FAQs for childcare settings have been updated to reflect the changes in guidance that will be in place from the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

This document does not include questions and answers relating to the test and trace system and what to do in the event of a suspected or confirmed case – these are available [here](#).

### **Settings**

#### **Q: What are the main changes to the guidance from 20<sup>th</sup> July?**

The key updates to the guidance are:

- From 20 July, early years settings will not be required to arrange children and staff in small, consistent groups.
- Settings should still consider how they can minimise mixing within settings, for example where they use different rooms for different age groups, keeping those groups apart as much as possible.
- Parents and carers should be encouraged to limit the number of settings their child attends, ideally ensuring their child only attends the same setting consistently. This should also be the same for staff.

#### **Q: How many children are we allowed to look after in our setting?**

Children attending nurseries and childminders were able to return from 1 June, and from 20 July early years providers can return to their usual practice without limiting group sizes. The guidance states that only until 20th July will providers need to have no more than 16 children. EYFS staff to child ratios and space requirements must still be met, plus you must undertake your own risk assessment to ensure the health & wellbeing of the numbers you intend to cater for in line with Government guidance and social distancing requirements.

#### **Q: Can children attend more than 1 setting from 20th July?**

The guidance states that families should be encouraged to limit the number of settings that their child attends, but the guidance does not say that children cannot attend more than 1 setting.

#### **Q: Can I choose not to offer a place to a child if they are attending another setting?**

Government guidance provides details of what providers must and should do as a minimum. If a provider wishes to put in place some additional requirements as part of your risk assessments, you are able to do this. For example, not accepting children who attend more than one setting.

#### **Q: Can we have a morning session for one group of children, and then a separate afternoon session for different children in the same space?**

Ideally providers should aim to offer consistent provision to the same set of children throughout the week. However, if there is no other alternative and absolutely required, you may operate with a morning session, followed by an afternoon session with a full clean of the premises in between.

**Q: Can additional children be added to the setting in the afternoon?**

Additional children can be added to the setting in the afternoon, but in order to minimise the mixing of groups of children, ideally this should be separate children i.e. not those from the morning session and not from another provider.

**Q: Can providers have the same staff in the morning and afternoon with the different groups of children?**

The guidance states that ideally staff should only attend / work in one setting (i.e. with one consistent group of children). If there are different groups of children in the morning and afternoon, then according to the guidance this would be allowed, but not encouraged as it would result in the potential for mixing. The setting should be encouraged to organise their rotas and staffing in such a way as to have a separate set of staff in the morning and the afternoon if at all possible.

**Q: Are before and after school clubs and other providers of wraparound care allowed to operate?**

Wraparound providers which are registered with Ofsted or with a Childminder Agency and run before and/or after school clubs on school premises or in early years settings, and can ensure they follow the safe working guidance, are able to operate.

Since the 4<sup>th</sup> July, wraparound care providers operating from other premises have also been able to open. They must follow the guidance on [protective measures for out of school settings during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

**Q: Can childminders and other early years settings do pick up and drops at school or other settings?**

Childminders and other settings should consider how they can work with parents to agree how best to manage any necessary journeys, for example pick-ups and drop-offs at schools, to reduce the need for a provider to travel with groups of children. If it is necessary for a childminder to pick up or drop off a child at school, walking is preferable. If this is not practicable, then a private vehicle is preferable to public transport.

**Visitors / staff movements**

**Q: Are settings allowed to invite visitors and non-staff members such as speech and language therapists or parents for stay and play into settings?**

Wherever possible, settings are encouraged to avoid visitors entering their premises. In instances where settings need to use other essential professionals such as social workers, speech and language therapists or counsellors, or professionals to support delivery of a child's EHC plan, settings should assess whether the professionals need to attend in person or can do so virtually. If they need to attend in person, they should closely follow the protective measures in the setting, and the number of attendances should be kept to a minimum. Where possible to do so, social distancing should be maintained.

Settings should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, and ensure site guidance on social distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival. Where visits can happen outside of setting hours, they should. A record should be

kept of all visitors where this is practicable. Where possible, the presence of any additional members of staff should be agreed on a weekly basis, rather than a daily basis to limit contacts. Sessions in settings that use external providers, which are not directly required for children's health and wellbeing, should be suspended. Parents and carers should not be allowed into the setting unless this is essential, and children should be dropped off and collected at the door if possible.

**Q: Can early years providers take groups of children to outdoor public places, for example if there is not private outdoor space in the setting?**

Settings should maximise use of private outdoor space. Childminders and early years providers may take small groups of children to outdoor public spaces, for example parks, provided that a risk assessment demonstrates that they can stay 2 metres away from other people at all times. This should be restricted to small groups and should be done in line with wider government guidelines on the number of people who can meet in outdoor public places. Providers should not take larger groups of children to public outdoor spaces at one time.

**Q: Can staff still take breaks away from the school or setting?**

It is important for staff wellbeing that they continue to take breaks as they would have done prior to COVID19. It is important that staff follow basic hygiene principles and ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water (or with alcohol based hand gel) on arrival and before leaving the setting. Staff should maintain 2m social distancing during their breaks and avoid touching the face, mouth etc.

**Infection control**

**Q: How should staff manage challenging behaviour in children e.g spitting, or dribbling in very young children e.g. when teething?**

In these circumstances, staff need to increase their level of self-protection, such as minimising close contact and having more frequent hand-washing and other hygiene measures, and regular cleaning of surfaces. PPE is not needed in these situations.

All settings should introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents. Settings should consider:

- in line with the risk assessment and timetabling of the day, putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
  - more frequent cleaning of rooms that are used by different groups
  - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
  - different groups don't need to be allocated their own toilets, but toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and children must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet

**Q: In what situations is PPE needed?**

PPE is only to be used in the following situations:

- For children, young people and students whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs should continue to receive their care in the same way.
- If a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home.

In the above situation where a young child has symptoms of coronavirus, the following PPE should be used:

- If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, or spitting, then eye protection should also be worn

**Q: Is it safe for staff to offer emotional support with physical contact to young children in early years settings?**

While it is not expected that children and staff within a group will keep 2 metres apart, it is important for settings to consider how they can minimise mixing, where possible. If children need emotional support e.g hugging this can and should be given, but staff should increase their level of self protection by undertaking frequent handwashing.

**Q: How can nursery / early years staff ensure the emotional wellbeing of a child where they are re-settling into their nursery or starting nursery for the first time?**

As some young children will not have been attending a setting for a number of weeks and may be feeling anxious, work with parents and carers to consider how best to manage dropping off their children while maintaining physical distancing. Settings are encouraged to avoid visitors or parents entering the premises. It is recommended that parents only come into the setting where it is absolutely essential to ensuring the child's wellbeing and should be avoided where possible. Any parent coming into the setting for settling in should follow strict hand hygiene measures and only have contact with their own child. It is advised that only one parent or carer is involved in settling in process and that their time spent in the nursery is kept to the absolute minimum.

**Young children with symptoms**

**Q: Young children and babies who attend nursery settings, for example, frequently get spikes in temperature e.g. due to teething, should they be sent home to self-isolate?**

Any child with a temperature, a new continuous cough or a change in their usual sense of taste or smell should be considered a possible case and collected as soon as possible and asked to self-isolate. Families should be encouraged to arrange a coronavirus test for the child as soon as possible. In the vast majority of cases the result will be negative, and the child can return to the setting and the family can stop self-isolation.

**Q: What do I do if a child in the childcare setting is showing symptoms, they have been sent home as per the guidelines but the parent is not happy with the**

## **requirement to test their child for COVID19 or them and their family to self-isolate for 14 days?**

The national guidance is that any individual, including children, who has symptoms of a fever, new, persistent cough or change / loss of taste / smell must immediately self-isolate.

If the family do not want to get a COVID19 test for the child then this is the parents decision. If the child is not tested then the child must remain in isolation for 7 days from the onset of the symptoms and not return to nursery during this time period, and the rest of the household must stay in isolation for 14 days. For a young child, this effectively means that they must also be in self-isolation for 14 days as the parent would not be able to come out to bring them into nursery anyway until the 14 day period is over.

If the family choose not to follow the self-isolation guidelines that is ultimately their decision, but the childcare setting should not accept the child (or any siblings in the household) until the isolation period is over.

### **Q: What do we do if a child who is sent home to isolate also has a sibling in the nursery or childcare setting?**

If a child develops symptoms of coronavirus and is sent home to isolate, then any other children in the same household who attend the childcare setting also need to be sent home at the same time. The child with symptoms needs to self-isolate for 7 days and the rest of the household for 14 days. If the child with symptoms has a negative test result then they and any siblings can return to the setting.

## **Testing for young children under 5**

### **Q: Can parents get a test for their young child with symptoms?**

Yes. Anyone in England and Wales who has symptoms of coronavirus, whatever their age can be tested for coronavirus. This includes all children and young babies.

### **Q: How can parents arrange a test for their young child with symptoms?**

Parents with children under the age of 5 who have coronavirus symptoms are advised to call 111 for clinical advice and to discuss and arrange testing.

Parents can use the [111 online coronavirus service](#) if their child is 5 or over.

### **Q: What type of test is used in young children?**

Testing for children under 5 is recommended by nasal swab only, rather than a combined nose and throat swab which is recommended for adults.

Children aged 11 or under cannot do the test themselves. Their parent or guardian will have to swab test their child, whether with a home test kit or at a test site (instructions will be provided), or parents can use the instructions at the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qHTBlxfNes&feature=youtu.be>.

### **Q: What about testing in babies under the age of 2?**

It is usually advised that testing for children under the age of 2 is carried out by a clinician. Parents should call the 111 service if their child under 2 has coronavirus symptoms and they need to arrange a test. The 111 service will be able to advise about the most appropriate way of ensuring that the child can be tested.

**Links to national guidance documents relevant for childcare settings**

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)

[Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)